Travellers' perspectives of travel constraints and travel booking channel preferences

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Abstract

It is important to identify travel constraints as it influences travel demand. The travel booking channels available also influence travel demand as it determines how easy it is to make the product available to the consumer. This paper investigates which travel constraints influence outbound tourism demand and which travel booking channels South African travellers prefer when making travel bookings. A quantitative research paradigm was utilised whereby a survey was conducted amongst 301 outbound South African travellers. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. In addition, Multiple Analysis of Variances were calculated to determine whether the demographic variables plays a role in the perception influence travel constraints and booking preferences. Financial constraints were identified as the main travel constraint. Online booking channels were favoured. Suggestions were provided on how travel agencies should market outbound destinations by changing the perceptions of potential travellers regarding travel constraints and so increase consumer satisfaction and how travel booking channel preferences could be better utilised to increase travel bookings.

Keywords: travel, reservations, booking constraints

Introduction

Tourism demand plays an important role within the tourism industry as without demand the tourism industry will not exist (Rosenbaum & Spears, 2009:315). According to Inkson and Minnaert (2012:60), tourism demand consists of three basic elements, namely, no demand, suppressed demand and actual demand. No demand relates to people without a desire to travel as well as those unable to participate in travel due to travel constraints (Page, 2007:69). Suppressed demand is associated with individuals incapable of travelling due to certain circumstances such as being disabled (Page, 2007:69). Actual demand is the number of people that partake in tourism, usually expressed as the number of travellers; tourism demand is generally measured by tourism statistics (Boniface & Cooper, 2009:23). As this article focuses on travel constraints, it will investigate possible reasons for no demand or suppressed demand. In the tourism industry it is commonly accepted that understanding travel demand and

knowledge of travel constraints are deemed important for forecasting future travel patterns (Yuan, Cai, Morrison & Linton, 2005:43). Nicolau and Más (2005:277) denote that travel constraints can influence the decision to travel and therefore tourism demand. Travel constraints can influence the quality of travelling negatively and prevent travellers from further travel (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000:910; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2007:435). The ease of using a specific booking channel can encourage travel demand, or if found difficult, discourage it (Smith, 2007:322; Tourism Economics, 2013:1). Few studies have focused on how either travel constraints or booking preferences can influence tourism demand, so it appears that there is a need for more research in this field. This article aims to elucidate how to go about overcoming or limiting outbound travel constraints. It will further investigate how travel booking channels can be utilised more effectively to increase travel demand. The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To empirically determine which travel constraints influence tourism demand;
- To empirically establish travel booking channel preferences;
- To determine potential travellers perception of travel constraints based on demographic profile;
- To determine the role demographic profile plays in booking channel preferences;
- To offer practical suggestions to travel and tourism businesses on how to formulate marketing strategies to change the perception regarding the identified travel constraints thereby increasing travel demand; and
- To indicate how travel booking channel preferences could be better utilised to increase travel bookings.

The remainder of this article will provide a theoretical overview on travel constraints and types of booking channels available and the role demographics of potential travellers play in their perception regarding travel constraints and travel booking channel preference. Thereafter, the methodology followed in this study will be elaborated on and lastly conclusions and recommendations will be provided on how to change the perception of potential travellers regarding travel constraints and better utilise different travel booking channels to increase travel demand.

Theoretical overview

This section will provide a brief theoretical overview of what can be regarded as travel constraints and the types of booking channels available. The discussions will also include the role demographics of potential travellers play in their perception regarding travel constraints and travel booking channel preference. Demographics can be defined as the study of a population's characteristics, which include; age, race, language, migration, education and employment variables (Yeoman & Butterfield, 2011:2).

Travel constraints

Backman and Crompton (1989:60) define constraints as barriers that hinder peoples' activities. The concept, travel constraints, originated from leisure constraints and has been discussed in literature since the early 1960s (Buchanan & Allen, 1985:40). Constraints within the tourism industry act as filters for tourism demand, hindering the potential tourist to engage in travel even though a motivation to travel may exist (Page & Hall, 2003:30). In other words, there may be no-

or suppressed travel demand as a result of the travel constraints. A review of literature revealed that travel constraints could be personal-, work- or accessibility related.

With regard to personal travel constraints, finance can be viewed as the main limiting travel constraint to participate in leisure and recreational activities (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000:910; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2007:435; Saayman, 2000:40). If not a work-related trip, the traveller has to personally fund the trip. The cost associated with travelling is perceived to be one of the most dominant tourism expenditures (Celata, 2013:2). Jackson (1993:29) found that social isolation such as being single can also be regarded a possible travel constraint. Real or imaginary fears such as fear of flying could be another reason why an individual do not travel (Saayman, 2000:42). Potential travellers may fear for their safety and not travel if there is limited information available of a destination (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010:460). Further discouragement from travelling could be because of fear of being attacked, or becoming lost or not understanding a foreign language at the destination (Saayman, 2000:40).

Carneiro and Crompton (2010:460) also found that the stage of family life-cycle hinder potential travellers from travelling as individuals with small children often prefer not to travel. It was mentioned that children could experience discomfort with their ears when flying, thereby preventing families with children from considering travelling abroad by air (Willacy, 2011:1). Mobility constraints such as a disability or illness may limit individuals to travel. The primary caretaker or family member or friend would also be unable to travel if the person he/she is caring for becomes ill or disable, depending on the severity of the disability or illness (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003:319). Travel altitude could pose problems for individuals with a cardiac or respiratory condition or those with anemia (Willacy, 2011:1). A further travel constraint could be the distance to the destination (Carneiro & Crompton, 2010:461) as deep vein thrombosis could occur from sitting for an extended period of time (Willacy, 2011:1), therefore travelling to destinations that require long flight hours, could be purposely avoided. Finding the time to travel if not having enough leave days available, could be another travel constraint (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003:320). Work pressure to meet work deadlines influence the possibility of potential travellers to take leave. Obtaining work leave during school holidays to take the family on holiday can further limit travel opportunities (Dominiczak, 2014:1). Travelling during school holidays is generally more expensive, as it normally falls within the peak travel season (McDougall & Bodkin, 2014:1). Consequently this has led to a situation where parents take their children out of school during school terms to go on holiday (Hope & Dominiczak, 2014:1).

Accessibility to the tourist destination may also be regarded as a travel constraint (Jackson, 1993:30). More specifically, Neumayer (2010:171) noted that obtaining travel related documents can be seen as a burden for tourists for the following reasons:

- Additional cost and discontent in applying for visas and other travel related documents before travel commences;
- The individual having to travel to the embassy or one of the few consulates (for some visas) and often having to wait possibly for hours for any service; and
- The issuing consulate or embassy sometimes denying the application without giving any reason.

The above discussion reveals nine frequently cited travel constraints namely; personal constraints (financial, having a disability/illness, social isolation, fear of the unknown, and family commitments), work-related constraints (number of leave days available which relates to time

constraints, work pressure) and accessibility related (safety fears and visa travel documentation requirements). No specific item was developed for family commitments in the questionnaire as travel constraint responses could be related to family life cycle as a demographic data variable. Social isolation was not investigated in this study as it was assumed that individuals who suffer from social isolation would have no desire to travel. Safety fears were also not investigated as it can be assumed that individuals will not travel to destinations they regard as unsafe. Therefore, this article will only test the following travel constraints; financial constraints, number of leave days available (time constraints), work pressure, fear of the unknown, having a disability and the inconvenience of obtaining travel related documents.

According to Cederholm (2014:1), demographical variables play a significant role in forecasting travel demand. Jonsson and Devonish (2008:401) state that demographical variables should be considered when predicting tourist buying behaviour, as it can act as a catalyst for predicting travel constraints and travel preferences. Kattiyapornpong and Miller (2009:90) state that travel behaviour and travel constraints are significantly different across levels of age, income and life stage. According to Nyaupane and Andereck's (2007:436) younger respondents (30 years and younger) and older respondents (71 years and older) regard travel cost as a major constraint. However, the 31 to 70 years old respondents found available time to travel as a major constraint. Yeoman (2008:50) mentions that there is an increase in the number of grandparents taking their grandchildren on holiday. This could possibly be due to the fact that grandparents have more free time to their disposal to do so. Several authors (Conyette, 2011:95; Correia & Elliott, 2006:50) pose that demographical variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, and family income can influence booking channel preference. De Jager and Ezeuduji (2014:6) are of the opinion that socio-demographic variables should also be considered as it may influence the type of booking channel chosen.

Based on the preceding discussion the following 10 sets of hypotheses were developed. Sixty hypotheses were developed based on the 10 demographical variables and six travel constraints (finances, number of days leave, work pressures, fear of the unknown, having a disability and inconvenience of obtaining travel documentation). The formulated and tested hypotheses are as follows:

- $H_{1.1-1.6}$:   *Gender* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.7-1.12}$:   *Age* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.13-1.18}$:   *Ethnicity* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.19-1.24}$:   *Language* spoken influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.25-1.30}$:   *Employment* status influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.31-1.36}$:   *Sector employed* in influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.37-1.42}$:   *Position in the organisation* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.43-1.48}$:   *Income earned* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.49-1.54}$:   *Education level* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.
- $H_{1.55-1.60}$:   *Marital status* influences the perception of what is regarded as travel constraints.

Booking channels

Choosing a destination is often a complex and difficult decision-making process as individuals have different destination preferences and expectations while having to pay in advance for it without knowing whether it will be a pleasant trip (Zhang, 2009:66). Decisions have to be made on the duration of the trip based on the budget of the individual, the type of activities interested in, chosen accommodation option and travel mode cost. It also requires taking into consideration the travel date and whether or not to take the children with, if having any (Carr, 2002:975). Most importantly the booking channel used can determine how time-consuming the decision-making process may be (Zhang, 2009:90).

Booking channels form the core of the tourism industry as without it the tourist would not be able to purchase travel products (Lubbe, 2005:50). Saayman (2000:60) distinguishes between the following travel service providers:
- Transport providers – include domestic-, inbound- and outbound transport operators;
- Destination providers – include accommodation, catering, shopping and activities that can be undertaken at the destination; and
- Tourism retail providers – include travel agencies and online providers who facilitate travel.

This study focuses on booking preferences with regards to tourism retail providers, whether being travel agents or online providers (Wynne, Berthon, Pitt, Ewing & Napoli, 2000:422). A travel agency is a brick and mortar business selling tourism products and/or services such as transportation, accommodation, and activities and attractions at the destination (Gee & Fayos-Solá, 1997:105; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2012:59).

Tourists can purchase travel products from local- and international travel agents or they can book online (De Jager & Ezeuduji, 2014:5; Sterry, 2014:1). The growth of online sales due to the rise of the internet has affect travel agent bookings negatively (De Jager & Ezeuduji, 2014:4). The role of the travel agent should however not be underestimated. Travel agents are normally knowledgeable on the various travel options and can assist potential travellers with a strict budget in making the most of their travel experience (Perlitz & Ellitiott, 2000:160). They can provide potential travellers with information on hidden cost of travelling such as visa fees and if there is a need to travel to obtain a visa (Gee & Fayos-Solá, 1997:100). These costs need to be factored into the travel package as it influences affordability of the trip, in other words the total travel cost. International travel agents on the other hand can provide exclusive travel deals to customers as they are aware of special offers by both local- and international travel agents (Klahn, 2015:1).

Using online bookings enable potential travellers to compare travel deals in terms of cost, travel time and what they want to include in their deals (Klahn, 2015:1). Potential travellers can book their holidays online at home as it is easy to do so and do not need to take time off to visit a travel agent (Gee & Fayos-Solá, 1997:102). Online searches can provide tourists with considerable information regarding destinations, more so than what can be obtained in travel brochures (Klahn, 2015:1).

With regards to the role demographics play in booking channel preferences, Bogdanovych, Berger, Simoff and Sierra (2006:422) found that females prefer to visit local travel agents as they enjoy the social interaction while Sommers (2008:1) confirmed the tendency of males to make use of online bookings rather than to visit local travel agents. An article in Wordpress

(2015:1) explained that managers or owners of businesses normally travel for business and their secretaries book these business trips through a local travel agent for international business travel agent. Conyette (2011:95) confirmed that the higher the qualification of an individual, the more likely the individual is to book their trip online. Based on the preceding discussion, the following 10 sets of hypotheses were developed. Thirty hypotheses were developed based on the 10 demographical variables and three travel booking channels (local- or international travel agents or online). The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

- $H_{1.1-1.3}$: *Gender* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.4-1.6}$: *Age* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.7-1.9}$: *Ethnicity* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.10-1.12}$: *Language* spoken plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.13-1.15}$: *Employment* status plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.16-1.18}$: *Sector employed in* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.19-1.21}$: *Position in the organisation* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.22-1.24}$: *Income earned* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.25-1.27}$: *Education level* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.
- $H_{1.28-1.30}$: *Marital status* plays a role in travel booking channel preference.

The perceived travel constraints of South Africans and travel booking channel preference as influenced by their demographical profile will be investigated in the empirical study.

Methodology

This study followed the quantitative research paradigm. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed. To participate in the study respondents had to reside in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, be older than eighteen years and in possession of a senior certificate. The questionnaire was distributed via email to friends and family. In turn these individuals distributed the questionnaire amongst their friends and colleagues. The sampling method adopted in this research was a combination of convenience- and snowball sampling.   A new scale was developed as no existing scale could be found for the items measured in this study. Six travel constraint items were tested on a 5 point Likert scale varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree. These travel constraints were financial, work related to number of days leave and work pressures, fear of the unknown, having a disability, and the inconvenience of obtaining travel documents. Travel booking channel preference were tested by means of three items (international travel agents, local travel agents or online bookings) on a 5 point Likert scale varying from strongly agree to strongly disagree. To simplify the results discussion the strongly agree and agree responses were combined and interpreted as agree and disagree and strongly disagree responses were combined and interpreted as disagree.

After data cleaning, a total of 301 questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis. The statistical computer package STATISTICA 12 (2014) was utilised to analyse the data. The validity of the measuring instrument was ascertained by using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). All items with factor loadings below 0.4 were deleted in the EFA. This contributed to the validity of the measuring instrument.

One of the most commonly used reliability measures is the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Gliem & Gliem, 2003:83). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is an indicator of the internal consistency

of a measuring instrument using rating scales such as Likert scales (George & Mallery, 2003:231). Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated to assess internal consistency of the scale items. This study adopted a Cronbach's alpha cut-off point off 0.6. George and Mallery (2003:50) state that a Cronbach's alpha of 0.6 and higher is considered acceptable. Individual items below the 0.6 cut-off point were deleted to improve the reliability of the measuring instrument.

Various statistical data analysis methods were utilised to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics were presented as means, standard deviation and ranking based on absolute frequency. Means were calculated to reduce the data into a single figure (Aaker, Day & Kumar, 2007:440). Standard deviations were calculated to determine the spread of the data set and the affiliation of the mean to the rest of the data. A small standard deviation signifies that data points are close to the mean and the responses were fairly similar (AGA Institute, 2014:1). The variables were ranked based on the absolute frequency results. Absolute frequency is simply the total sum of data within a given interval or frequency bin and can indicate preferences towards certain variables (Galderisi, 2015:33). For the purpose of this study, MANOVAs were calculated to determine the role demographics of potential travellers play in their perception regarding travel constraints and travel booking channel preference. MANOVA is a statistical analysis that examines significant variances between means (Veal, 2005:268). A significant F-value in the MANOVA-analysis is only an indication that not all the population means are the same. It does not indicate which specific means are different. As a result, MANOVAs more often than not raise more questions than answers (Howell, 2012:370).

To overcome this limitation of MANOVAs, a Post-hoc Scheffé test was completed to identify where the significant differences occurred between the different means (Lund Research, 2013:4). Cohen's d values were also calculated in order to assess the practical significance of the mean scores (Cohen, 1988:59; Walker, 2008:1). If Cohen's D values are $0.2 < d < 0.5$, it can be considered a 'small' effect size; $0.5 < d < 0.8$ represents an average effect size and $d > 0.8$ represents a large effect size (Cohen, 1988:59; Walker, 2008:1). Conducting the Post-hoc Scheffé tests and Cohen's d values with MANOVAs enabled the researchers to establish the relationship between variables and to comment on the significant mean differences and whether the mean difference had practical significance.

The Empirical Results

This section will present and discuss the results obtained from the empirical research conducted.

Validity and reliability

All items loaded as intended onto the two factors (travel constraints and booking channel preferences) and had factor loadings above 0.4. The factors in this study met the criteria adopted in this study of a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.6 and higher, thus satisfactory evidence of reliability was provided (travel constraints = 0.6; booking channels = 0.8).

Empirical results of the travel constraints
Table 1 depicts the descriptive statistics of what potential travellers regarded as travel constraints.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of travel constraints

Travel Constraints	Percentage			Mean	Standard deviation	Absolute frequency	Rank
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree				
Financial	83	12	5	4.3	0.9	1311	1
Number of leave days available	53	26	21	3.4	1.2	1048	2
Work pressure	47	27	26	3.3	1.2	991	3
Fear of the unknown	6	16	78	1.8	1.0	543	5
A disability	7	8	85	1.5	0.9	473	6
Inconvenience of obtaining travel documents	27	26	47	2.6	1.3	789	4

As can be seen in Table 1 the majority of respondents (83%) agree that their main travel constraint is the financial ability to travel. Number of leave days (53% of respondents agree) and work pressure (47% of respondents agree) are to some extent regarded as travel constraints. Few (6% and 7% respectively) respondents agree that fear of the unknown and a disability can influence travel demand. Twenty seven percent of respondents regard inconvenience of obtaining travel documents as a travel constraint. However, based on the means, except for financial constraints, respondents tend to be neutral or disagree whether these can be considered as constraints. The standard deviations vary between 0.9 and 1.3 indicating that the responses are fairly similar. With regard to the absolute frequency, as can be seen from Table 1 the main three travel constraints are financial (1131), number of leave days (1048) and work pressure (991). Based on these findings one can assume that travel constraints are mostly financial or work related. The least regarded as travel constraints are a disability (473) and fear of the unknown (543).

These findings are confirmed by several authors. Saayman (2000:40) stated that financial constraints present the biggest hurdle for travelling. Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:319) indicated that work related constraints (leave or work pressure) can influence actual- and suppressed demand within tourism. Huh and Singh (2007:220) found that travellers with a disability are travelling much more frequently as the accessibility to travel-related products has been upgraded to accommodate disabled individuals. Danigelis (2014:1) confirmed that the advancement in technology, the availability of travel information and downloadable travel related mobile applications have taken the "fear" out of travelling and made the completion of travel documentation easier. The number of embassies in South Africa has increased and visa services are now available in Durban and Port Elizabeth, in addition to Cape Town and Pretoria. This has made it easier for potential travellers to submit their visa documentation in person (Travelstart, 2010:1).

MANOVAs were utilised to examine general differences between means (Lane, 2014:1). If any variance between groups occurs, this will be represented by a large F ratio (f-value) with a probability (p-value) of less than 0.05 which constitutes statistical significance (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007:448). Due to the rather considerable number of hypotheses developed and

tested, only the statistically significant relationships of the MANOVAs will be reported indicating the role demographics of potential travellers play in their perception regarding travel constraints.

Table 2 present the findings of the statistically significant relationships found between the demographic variables and the travel constraint variables (the p value is indicated below the F value).

Table 2:   **Statistically significant relationships between demographic- and travel constraint variables**

Dependent variables: Demographics	Independent variable: Travel constraints					
	Financial	Number of days leave	Work pressures	Fear of the unknown	Disability	Inconvenience of obtaining travel documents
Gender	6.50 **0.011		9.04 **0.002			
Age		2.41 **0.036				
Ethnicity				5.70 *0.000		
Language				5.62 *0.000		
Employment status	3.81 **0.001	3.50 **0.002	4.51 *0.000			
Employment sector		2.25 **0.001	2.25 **0.001	2.63 *0.000	1.62 **0.042	
Position in organisation	6.04 *0.000		3.18 **0.008			
Income earned	4.27 *0.000					3.98 *0.000
Educational level		2.79 **0.017				
Marital status		3.62 **0.006				

* p <0.001 **p <0.05

As can be seen in Table 2, a total of 18 statistical significant relationships were found between the demographic- and the travel constraint variables.

Gender
Gender had two statistically significant relationships with financial constraints and work pressures. The post-hoc Scheffé test revealed one group difference for the statistically significant relationship between gender and financial travel constraints. The mean score for females ($\dot{x}$ = 4.455) was higher than for males ($\dot{x}$ = 4.163) regarding financial travel constraints. The Cohen D test (d = 0.29) confirmed that the mean difference has practical significance. This finding indicates that South African females may be more financially strapped than males to travel internationally. It could be attributed to males having higher positions in the organisation and thereby receiving a higher income, are more affluent and have more disposable income to travel. As the glass ceiling is still prevalent in South Africa, females might receive less salary than their male counterparts in senior positions and therefore do not have enough money at their disposal to travel. The glass ceiling phenomenon is an invisible barrier that prevents women, minority groups and certain ethnicities from obtaining upper-level positions within on organisation due to implicit prejudice of the employer (OECD, 2008:145).

The post-hoc Scheffé test revealed one group difference for the statistical significant relationship between gender and the travel constraint, work pressure. Males (ẋ = 3.496) had a higher mean score than females (ẋ = 3.496) for work pressure as a travel constraint. The mean difference is also of practical significance (Cohen's d-value = 0.35). This finding concur with those of Khan (2011:115) who found that the gender and position an individual holds within an organisation can limit travel activities due to not having enough discretionary time as a result of work pressure. According to the American Psychological Association (2016:1) women (married women more so than single women) are more likely to suffer from work pressure than men. In particular, in a study conducted in America, it was found that 32% of women indicate that they are not provided with sufficient career advancement opportunities and has to work much harder than men to be on the same level (Weber & Shellenbarger, 2013:1). Further to that women are also pressurised by their families to contribute to the household earning, which often resulted in women working a 55 hours work week. Work pressure is considered a constraint for employed individuals working in certain sectors which require long hours and meeting strict deadlines (Hamlett, 2016:1).

Age
Age had a statistically significant relationship with number of leave days available. However, the result of the post-hoc Scheffé test was not powerful enough to detect any group differences for this relationship and thus no further tests were performed.

Ethnicity
Ethnicity had a statistically significant relationship with fear of the unknown. The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistically significant relationship between ethnicity and the travel constraint fear of the unknown, revealed two group differences. Significant differences in mean scores exist for the travel constraint, fear of the unknown between black respondents (ẋ = 2.270) and white respondents (ẋ = 1.657), as well as between coloured respondents (ẋ = 2.500) and white respondents (ẋ = 1.657). Both these group differences presented small- to average practical significance (d = 0.63 and 0.21 respectively). Therefore, black- and coloured respondents seem more fearful of venturing into the unknown (outbound destination) than white respondents. Ethnic affiliation can thus restrict the potential of black and coloured travellers in South Africa. These individuals may not have yet had an opportunity to travel and venture outside the borders of South Africa. A study by Wilhelm-Stanis, Schneider, Chavez and Shinew (2009:90) and Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:319) found that people from different ethnic backgrounds are scared of getting lost in a foreign country. Carter (2008:270) confirms the tendency of black travellers to visit well-known destinations that they are familiar with. Ferreira, Perks and Oosthuizen (2015:424) noted that South African individuals from the black ethnicity group tends to visit destinations with a well-established infrastructure, which further confirm the tendency of black travellers to visit well-known tourist destinations.

Language
Language spoken had a statistically significant relationship with fear of the unknown. The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistically significant relationship between language spoken and the travel constraint fear of the unknown, revealed one group difference. Xhosa speaking respondents (ẋ = 2.181) had a higher mean score than English speaking respondents (ẋ = 1.550) for the travel constraint, fear of the unknown. This difference is of practical significance (d = 0.73). As English is a universal spoken language, Xhosa speaking individuals may due to the apartheid era in South Africa, not have been educated in English and may therefore not have a good command of the English language and lack confidence in speaking it when having

to travel internationally. The language ability of travellers could thus pose travel constraints in terms of fear to venture into the unknown. These findings are supported by Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:319) who state that some individuals may be fearful to get lost in a foreign destination, and then not being able to express them in a language that can be understood.

Employment status
Employment status had three statistically significant relationships with financial constraints, number of leave days available and work pressures.

The post-hoc Scheffé test revealed one group difference for the statistically significant relationship between employment status and financial travel constraints. Regarding financial travel constraints, full-time employed individuals ($\dot{x}$ = 4.409) had a higher mean score than self-employed individuals ($\dot{x}$ = 3.750). The Cohen's d-value was 0.61 which presents average practical significance. Self-employed individuals might have more disposable income or have easier access to funds to travel than full-time employees earning a fixed monthly salary. The employment status of potential South African travellers could thus pose financial travel constraints. These findings concur with the findings in a study by Khan (2011:115) which indicated that employment status can be directly associated with financial constraints.

The results of the post-hoc Scheffé tests for the two statistically significant relationships between employment status and number of days leave and work pressures were not powerful enough to detect mean group differences, and thus no further tests were performed.

Employment sector
Employment sector had four statistically significant relationships with number of leave days available, work pressures, fear of the unknown and having a disability. However, the results of the post-hoc Scheffé tests were not powerful enough to detect any group differences for these relationships, and thus no further tests were performed.

Position in the organisation
Position in the organisation had two statistically significant relationships with financial constraints and work pressures. However, the result of the post-hoc Scheffé test was not powerful enough to detect any group differences for the relationship between position in the organisation and work pressures.

The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistically significant relationship between position in organisation and financial travel constraints revealed two significant group differences. Regarding financial constraints, employees ($\dot{x}$ = 4.590) have a higher mean score than management ($\dot{x}$ = 4.106) and business owners ($\dot{x}$ = 3.840). The Cohen's d-values (0.72 and 0.52 respectively) presented large to average practical significance. These findings are supported by Khan (2011:115) who states that the income of a working individual is linked to its positions in the organisation.

Income earned
Income earned had two statistically significant relationships with financial travel constraints and the inconvenience of obtaining travel documents.

The post-hoc Scheffé test for the relationships between income earned and financial travel constraints revealed two group differences. Individuals earning between R10 001 to R20 000 ($\dot{x}$

= 4.585) and between R20 001 to R30 000 (ẋ = 4.612) had a higher mean score than individuals earning between R40 001 to R50 000 (ẋ =3.703).   The Cohen's d-values present a large practical significance (d = 0.81 and 0.82 respectively). The income of potential South African travellers in the middle income groups consequently posed more of a financial travel constraint than for those in a higher income group. These findings are supported by Guillet, Lee, Law and Leung (2011:557) who state that income earned can pose a financial travel constraint.

However, the result of the post-hoc Scheffé test was not powerful enough to detect any group differences for the relationship between income earned and the inconvenience of obtaining travel documents, and thus no further tests were performed.

Education level
Education level had one statistically significant relationship with number of leave days available. However, the result of the post-hoc Scheffé test was not powerful enough to detect any group differences for this relationship, and thus no further tests were performed.

Marital status
Marital status had one statistically significant relationship with number of leave days available. The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistically significant relationship between marital status and the travel constraint number of days leave revealed one group difference. Regarding number of days leave as a travel constraint, unmarried individuals (ẋ = 3.800) had a slightly higher mean score than married individuals (ẋ = 3.251). The Cohen's d-value was 0.46 which presents small practical significance. Unmarried South African individuals as breadwinners may thus not be keen to take leave to travel internationally as it may influence their income and may be more cautious with their money as they do not have a marriage partner to assist if in need of money for emergencies. This finding is supported by Hung and Petrick (2012:210) which state that marital status could influence financial travel constraints and the availability of travel time.

Empirical results of the preferred travel booking channels

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics regarding the preferred travel booking channels of the respondents that participated in this study.

Table 3:   Descriptive statistics of preferred travel booking channels

Booking channels I prefer booking:	Percentage			Mean	Standard deviation	Absolute frequency	Rank
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree				
Through local travel agent as they can answer my questions face to face	52	25	23	3.4	1.2	1040	2
Through international travel agents as they provide better travel deals	32	39	29	3.0	1.2	920	3
Online as it provides flexibility regarding travel arrangements	58	24	18	3.6	1.1	1109	1

Table 3 presents the overall results regarding the respondents' preferred travel booking channel. The most preferred travel booking channel is to book online (58% of respondents in agreement), closely followed by 52% of respondents that indicate they prefer to book with local travel agents as their questions can be answered in a face-to-face manner. Based on the means, respondents were on average neutral on booking channel preference with either a local or international travel agent, but on average agree that they utilise the online booking option, although these means values are very close. The standard deviations were 1.1 or 1.2; indicating that the responses were fairly similar. It must be noted that many respondents were neutral regarding their booking preference with any of the booking channels tested.

With regard to the absolute frequency as can be seen from Table 4, the most preferred travel booking channel was online (1109), followed by using a local travel agent (1040). These findings are confirmed by Travelstart (2014:1) that indicated that more than half of South African travellers use online bookings. International travel agents (920) as a booking channel was the least preferred by respondents as confirmed by Travelstart (2014:1) which found that only 32% of South Africans use international travel agents. The reason for this can be due to the limited physical presence of international travel agents in South Africa. However, as reflected in Table 4, respondents prefer to also speak in a face-to-face manner to local travel agents (52% in agreement). In a study by Travelstart (2014:1) it was found that more than half of the respondents (52%) still prefer local agents as they can ask their questions in a face-to-face manner. Furthermore, MANOVAs were calculated to establish whether demographics play a role in travel booking channel preference to establish how marketers could go about increasing travel bookings. Due to the rather considerable number of hypotheses developed and tested, only the statistically significant relationships of the MANOVAs will be reported indicating which demographic factors play a role in travel booking channel preference.

Table 4 presents the findings of the statistically significant relationships found between the demographic variables and travel booking preference (the p value is indicated below the F value).

Table 4:   Relationships between demographic variables and booking channels

Dependent variables: Demographics	Independent variable: Travel booking preference		
	Local	**International**	**Online**
Gender	11.97 *0.000		9.98 **0.001
Age	2.77 **0.018	3.50 **0.004	
Ethnicity	2.79 **0.026	2.54 **0.039	
Employment status	3.00 **0.007		2.69 **0.014
Employment sector	1.96 **0.007		
Position in organisation	6.00 *0.000		2.52 **0.029
Income earned	3.17 **0.002	3.03 **0.004	3.48 **0.001
Education	2.26 **0.048		4.40 *0.000

* p <0.001 **p <0.05

Table 4 presents the findings of the 16 statistically significant relationships found between the demographic variables and the preferred travel booking channels.

However, the post-hoc tests were not powerful enough to detect mean differences for the statistically significant relationships between age, ethnicity, employment status, employment sector and income earned and any of the preferred travel booking channels.

Gender
The post-hoc Scheffé test was not powerful to detect mean differences for the relationships between gender and international travel agent as a preferred travel booking channel.   The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistical significant relationship between gender and local travel agents as a preferred booking channel revealed that females ($\dot{x}$ = 3.800) had a higher mean score than males ($\dot{x}$ = 3.251). The Cohen's d-value was 0.40 which presents a small practical significance. Bogdanovych *et al.* (2006:422) confirmed that females prefer social interaction when dealing with local travel more so than males. The post-hoc Scheffé test for the relationship between gender and online bookings revealed that males ($\dot{x}$ = 3.800) had a higher mean score than females ($\dot{x}$ = 3.251). The Cohen's d-value was 0.37 which presents a large practical significance. Based on this result male respondents might prefer to book holidays online while female respondents might prefer to book their holidays with a local travel agent as they can ask face-to-face questions. Sommers (2008:1) acknowledged that males are more technologically advanced than their female counter parts which would explain the tendency of males to make use of online bookings rather than to visit local travel agents.

Position in the organisation
The post-hoc Scheffé tests were not powerful to detect mean differences for the relationships between position in the organisation and international travel agents and online as preferred travel booking channels.

The post-hoc Scheffé test for the statistical significant relationship between position in organisation and local travel agents as a preferred booking channel revealed two group differences. The first significant difference indicated that employees ($\dot{x}$ = 3.785) had a higher mean score than business owners ($\dot{x}$ = 2.900) and employees ($\dot{x}$ = 3.785) had a higher mean score than managers ($\dot{x}$ = 3.146). The Cohen's D values were 0.65 and 0.53 respectively which present an average practical significance. Based on these results employees might prefer to book holidays via local travel agents whereas business owners and managers would not do so. This may be attributed to the fact that secretaries normally book for managers or owners of the business through a local travel agent for international business travelling as confirmed by Wordpress (2015:1).

Education level
The post-hoc Scheffé tests were not powerful to detect mean differences for the relationships between education level and local- and international travel agents as preferred booking channels.   For the statistically significant relationship between education level and online travel booking as the preferred travel booking channel, the post-hoc Scheffé test revealed two group differences. The significant differences indicated that individuals with post graduate qualifications ($\dot{x}$ = 4.0556) had a higher mean score than individuals with a grade 12 qualification ($\dot{x}$ = 3.270) and those with certificates ($\dot{x}$ = 3.142). The Cohen's d-values were 0.67

and 0.80 respectively which present average to large practical significances. It seems that the more educated an individual is, the more likely it is that the potential traveller will use technology (online bookings) as a preferred booking channel. This finding is supported by Conyette (2011:95) which found that education is positively related to the intention to book travel online; the higher the qualification the more likely the individual is to make use of online travel bookings.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Nine frequently cited travel constraints were identified from literature and could be classified as personal-, work- and accessibility related. The five personal related travel constraints are financial, having a disability/illness, social isolation, fear of the unknown, and family commitments. The two work-related constraints refer to number of leave days available which can relate to time constraints as well as work pressures. Lastly the two accessibility constraints mentioned were safety fears and obtaining visa travel documentation. The empirical study only test six of the travel constraints namely, financial constraints, number of leave days available, work pressures, fear of the unknown, having a disability and the inconvenience of obtaining travel related documents. Evidence of the validity of the items in the factor and the reliability of the factor were provided.

A comparison of the literature (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000:910; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2007:435; Saayman, 2000:40) and empirical results confirmed that financial constraints pose as the main travel constraint. Although literature identified fear of the unknown, having a disability or the inconvenience of obtaining travel documentation as a major travel constraint, the respondents in this study did not seem to regard it so. The inconvenience of obtaining travel documentation is not regarded as a constraint despite the fact that Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa, has only a German and British embassy and potential travellers need to travel to other cities in the country for visa purposes. It seemed as if the sample of this study probably travel to places that do not require a visa or to places where there is not a need to appear in-person for an interview at a visa office. This is confirmed by Ferreira (2015:154) which indicate that the top two outbound destinations for the residents of Nelson Mandela Bay is firstly the United Kingdom and secondly Mauritius. Application for a United Kingdom visa can be done in Port Elizabeth and South African citizens do not require a visa to travel to Mauritius. The demographical profile of the potential travellers can influence their perceptions on what they regard as travel constraints. Seven practical significant relationships were found between the demographic classification data and the four of the travel constraints. The conclusions and recommendations are based on these results.

It seems that the gender, employment status, position in organisation and income of potential travellers influence their perception regarding financial travel constraints. These findings are supported by Khan (2011:115) who poses that the demographical profile of the potential traveller can pose financial constraints. No specific group differences were discussed in this study by Khan (2011). With the empirical results of this study in mind, it is recommended that travel agents and tour operators design travel packages taking into consideration the financial constraints of potential travellers and differentiate these packages to suit the traveller. Travel agents should market a variety of budget travel packages to females to enable more price-sensitive lower income females with the potential to travel. With regards to the employment status, position in the organisation and income earned, travel agents and tour operators should

tailor travel packages taking into account the employment profile of potential travellers, where travellers could select different options (for example flying first class versus economy class and five star accommodation versus budget accommodation) with the reason for travel in mind whether it be business or for leisure. The economy class travel packages could include accommodation, meals and some tours to make the trip more economical for the potential traveller. It seems that the marital status of potential travellers influence their perception regarding the travel constraint, number of leave days available. This finding is supported by Hung and Petrick (2012:210) who indicated that marital status can influence the time available to travel. However, these authors did not further investigate specific marital status differences in this regard. Taking into consideration the empirical results of this study, it is therefore suggested that travel agents should take into consideration the marital status of potential travellers by offering unmarried individuals travel packages out of season with longer trips to enjoy with or without friends with a focus on various activities at the destination. For married individuals with children, family travel packages should be offered where children can go for free under a certain age, for a shorter trip and with activities that children would also be interested in, while focusing on a message of family togetherness.

It also seems that the gender of potential travellers influence their perception regarding the travel constraint, work pressure. These findings are supported by Khan (2011:115) who indicated that the extent of an individual's work pressure can be influenced by the demographical characteristics of the potential traveller. However no specific group differences were investigated by Khan (2011). With the empirical results of this study in mind, it is therefore recommended that travel agents and tour operators compile travel packages specifically for males with the focus on relaxation with shorter durations, as they perceive work pressure more so than females as a travel constraint. Destinations where visas are not required without the need for a long flight might be the most sought-after. The focus of the relaxation can either be physical or emotional.   It further appears that the ethnic affiliation of potential travellers influence their perception regarding the travel constraint, fear of the unknown. This finding is supported by Goeldner and Ritchie (2003:319) who stated that the fear of getting lost and not being able to express yourself at a foreign destination is language related. However, the study by these authors did not indicate specific ethnic affiliation group differences. Based on the empirical results of this study, it is suggested that travel agents should ascertain from potential South African black travellers what exactly are their fears and take this into consideration when choosing the outbound destination and type of travel package. Choosing destinations where English is widely spoken could eliminate their fears of not being understood at the destination. Not much could be done if potential travellers have a fear for flying. Black South Africans with a fear of venturing into the unknown should be put at ease that they can book for a tour where the whole tour group stays together and they have access to a tour guide at all times. As South Africa is culturally diverse and have eleven official languages it can be problematic for a tour operator to satisfy the needs of every language group. However, if it was possible to employ tour guides that can speak at least three of the most spoken languages in South Africa, it may eliminate the fear of travelling for Black South travellers and increase travel demand.

Conclusions and recommendations regarding booking channel preference

Three travel booking channel preferences were identified from literature and could be classified as through local-, international travel agents and online booking. Thus, the availability of different booking channels for different target markets were recognised Evidence of the validity of the items in the factor and the reliability of the factors were provided. A comparison of the

literature (Travelstart 2014:1) and the empirical results confirmed that online bookings are preferred, although face-to-face is also favoured. The demographical profile of the potential traveller plays a role in the travel booking channel preference. Six practical significant relationships were found between the demographic classification data and the three travel booking channels. The following conclusions and recommendations are based on these results:

It looks as if gender plays a role in potential travellers' booking channel preference. Potential female travellers prefer to book with local travel agents, while males prefer to book online. This finding is supported by Bogdanovych et al. (2006:422) who found that females prefer to book with local travel agents as they enjoy the social interaction, unlike males. However, whether these findings are of practical significance were not tested by these authors. Based on the empirical findings of this study, it is therefore suggested that in advertisements of travel package deals, both the physical- and website address of the company should be supplied. Females will then have the physical address of the travel agent to visit and have face-to-face (social contact) with a representative at the travel agency, whereas males can book online via the link on the website. It also seems that position in the organisation plays a role in potential travellers' booking channel preference. Employees in a business would rather book with a local travel agent. The reason for this could be that they want information regarding budget travel options at different locations, about the travel documentation required and the activities available at the destination. It is supposed that employees may travel for leisure and business owners and managers more so for business purposes. For this reason it is suggested that local travel agents should advertise different budget leisure travel packages that would appeal to most of the working population. Managers and business owners travelling for business reasons most probably ask their secretaries to take care of their travel bookings. Travel agencies should forge relationships with businesses to organise their business travels. They should build a relationships with the secretaries of the businesses, to be the preferred booking channel.

It appears that education level plays a role in potential travellers' booking channel preference. More educated potential travellers choose to book online. No literature proof could be found to support this finding except that Sommers (2008:1) and Conyette (2011:95) indicated that the tendency for travellers to book online is strongly influenced by demographical variables. It is recommended that travel agents should increase their online presence through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, e-mail or Short Message Services. Using social media would allow existing travellers to share their experiences after returning home and by doing so encourage potential travellers to also visit these outbound destinations. Business related travel deals can be advertised on the travel agent's website to target the more educated market. Travel agents could also provide an online link on the university websites so that academics attending educational conferences can obtain quick information about travel packages available and the need for a visa or not at the conference destination. The ease of navigating on the travel agents' websites is important. Travel agents should upgrade their websites on a regular basis with special travel offers to increase business travel demand.

Concluding remarks

This research provides all travel agents and tour operators with more insight on how to addressed perceived travel constraints and how to utilise the different booking channels to market their products optimally. The findings of the research will assist travel-related businesses to develop new products that are better suited to the needs of the potential outbound travellers in South Africa, taking into consideration travellers' demographic profile. With appropriate

product offerings, the needs of all travellers can be met and travel constraints limited. It is acknowledged that the sample was restricted to one province in South Africa. However, due to the large sample size and the fact that perceived travel constraints and booking channel preferences are not province bound, the results may be generalised to include the views of all outbound South African travellers.

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